

# A New Call to Arms

by David Legge

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*This sermon emphasizes the need for a new call to arms in the church, focusing on the importance of spiritual warfare, unity in Christ, and the power of prayer. It highlights the historical impact of revival in Ulster and the transformative potential of the gospel to bring about lasting change. The speaker challenges the church to rise up, put on the armor of God, and engage in the spiritual battle with faith and prayer, rather than relying on politics or worldly systems.*

**Duration:** 1:01:22

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## Transcript

Okay, can you hear me at the back, yes? Well, good evening to you all, and thank you for coming to this last session. I want you to turn in your Bibles with me, please, to where I believe the Lord would have us begin tonight, and we're going to be looking at many scriptures this evening. I feel the Lord has led something on my heart to close the conference, and so we're turning to Romans chapter 13, please, Romans chapter 13.

And if there was a title for my message tonight, it would be, A New Call to Arms, A New Call to Arms. So we are looking at Romans 13, please, and beginning to read at verse 11. Paul writes, and do this, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand, therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. Let us pray, and as your head is bowed, please do pray for me.

Paul said, pray for me, that I may speak as I ought to speak, with boldness, and I need your prayers tonight. So please pray for me, and pray for yourself, and pray for us all, and pray for this land. Oh Father,

Holy God, Abba Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus.

We thank you for everything that he is, and all that he means to us, and all that he has done for us, all that he's doing for us, all he will do for us. Oh God, we are overwhelmed when we think of the Lord Jesus, your beloved Son, the one in whom is all your delight, the darling of your bosom, and we pray that tonight we will be drawn closer to him, and the drawing closer to him would have an effect on everything around us in our environment, the people that we rub shoulders with, not just in our churches, but in our communities, in our workplaces, our schools, and universities. In this land, oh God, we want to make a difference.

We want to be salt and light. We want to make a dent, a mark for Christ in this day, and our generation. Lord, before it's too late, we cannot praise you in the grave.

Oh God, let us do something while it is yet day. Oh God, come tonight. Lord, we're listening for your voice.

We long to hear from heaven. Lord, we long that you would speak from heaven with a message, a message from God himself. Lord, let us hear it.

Of his ears to hear, and eyes to see, and hearts to receive with meekness the engrafted word of truth. For we ask these things in the precious, mighty, strong name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now, as I'm sure you're well aware, I count myself as an Irishman, but I'm also an Ulster man, and I come from the province of Ulster, and if you're not familiar with the Irish provinces, there's Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connacht, and I'm from the northern province of Ulster, and we, this year, have celebrated the 150th anniversary of the 1859 revival in Ulster. Many churches and Christian organizations have been commemorating and celebrating, rightly so, the fact that God, so many years ago now, God moved in mighty revival, and estimates are that around about a hundred thousand souls, in a very short period, a period of years, were swept mightily into the kingdom of God. And I have to say to you tonight that whilst the province of Ulster needs revival, is in dire need of revival, and the church is in decline, it is depleting spiritually and morally and numerically, there are still the remnants of revival in Ulster.

And Belfast, the city in which I was born, is one of the most, if not the most, evangelized city in the world by square mile. When Billy Graham visited Windsor Park football stadium in the 1940s, at which my own grandfather was converted, he said out of all the places in the world that he would not want to go to hell from, it would be Belfast, because they had such a witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ for so many years. And like many of the histories of revival, revival history, wherever the locality or jurisdiction might be, shows that revival among the church, God's people, greatly affects a nation.

And our nation is still affected up in the north. Edwin Orr, one of the greatest authorities on the history of revival, claims that the evangelical awakening right throughout the 18th century saved the nation of Britain from the revolutionary experience that ravaged the continent of Europe at that time. Documented historical fact.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, of course, an English evangelist, it is thought defeated Voltaire, the French philosopher, and Dias. His preaching of the gospel, the consequence awakening, pushed back the forces of darkness. It was equally true that the period of revival across America, at that same time in the 1800s, saved the USA from the godless French philosophy that had influenced almost every college by the close of the 18th century.

Just to give you an example of how bad things were in the States, at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Green records that he knew of only two professing Christians among the students. Two professing Christians among those who were training for the office of ministry, supposedly. In the College of William and Mary in Virginia, it is said that that college, and I'm quoting, was a hotbed of French politics and religion.

And almost certainly the period of revival saved America from the tragedy of the worst elements of the French Revolution that affected Europe. In my own province of Ulster, we have a very bloody history. Indeed, the island of Ireland has a very bloody history going back 400, 500 years.

I was driving down to this conference from County Armagh and going through the hills, the valleys, and mountains of South Armagh on that beautiful day that it was on Friday morning. I was struck by the wonder of God's creation and yet also struck by the depravity of man because those hills and valleys of South Armagh are stained and drenched in the blood of innocents. And yet God came and God even stayed the hand of evil men whilst we have a very bloody history.

It could have been oh so much worse if it wasn't just for God's general grace, but the awakening of God in our nation. I'll give you one example. In 1920, going long past the 1859 revival, again the Northern Irish state, the province of Ulster, was in chaos.

Fear and uncertainty filled the minds of people and the politicians, as they still seem to be, were at their wit's end as to what to do. Murder and mayhem seemed to rule the province. But for the Christian, there was hope.

And that always must be our clarion cry as the church. No matter how down we get on ourselves and conditions and circumstances around us, we must remember that we have the treasure within earthen vessels. We are the one who has hope and where there is God, there is hope.

God raised a man by the name of WP Nicholson. He was a rough, crude, uncouth individual if ever there was one. But he was God's man and he was used to preach Christ to the nation in a language that people understood.

My grandfather worked in the shipyard in Belfast and I'm told that my great-grandfather helped build one of the four funnels of the Titanic. Now, it wasn't his fault. It went down.

At least, I don't think it was. I think it had something to do with an iceberg in the Atlantic. But the men of the shipyard, rough working-class men, were affected by the preaching of WP Nicholson.

They understood what he was saying about sin and about salvation to such an extent that God moved mightily. So much so that the restitution and repentance in the life of those men meant that they brought back to the shipyard many tools and implements of their trade that they'd stolen. But they brought back so many that they had to build a new shed on the shipyard and they called it Nicholson's Shed.

And people kept returning so many stolen goods that they had to tell them, stop bringing them back. We have no more room to hold them. But that's what happens when when God moves.

But greater than stolen goods returned in 1920, a civil war, a potential civil war in Ulster was turned back because of the grace of God in revival. As I've already said, we've been celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1859 revival and as a result there was a dramatic reduction in the crime rate in the nation. The

following statistics from Dr. William Gibson's history of the 1859 revival entitled The Year of Grace indicates the effect that revival had on public morality.

And I'm quoting him, he says, the number of prisoners for trial in the quarter sessions for County Antrim in October 1859, six months after the commencement of the revival, was exactly one-half of that of the previous year. Cut by 50% at the Ballymena quarter sessions held in April 1860 after the revival had been in existence for over a year in that locality, there was not one single criminal case on the records. Not one.

A coal reign magistrate, that's a time the very north coast of Ireland, a magistrate there declared, quoting him again, when I look into the calendar for the last three months I find but one new case which is in some respects very unimportant. I am greatly struck at the appearance of this. So small is the number of cases I formerly had calendars filled with charges for different nefarious practices, pocket picking and larcenies of various sorts.

How is such a gratifying state of things accounted for? It must be from the improved state of the morality of the people. I believe I am fully warranted now to say that to nothing else than the moral and religious movement which commenced early last summer can the changes be attributed. Indeed a Roman Catholic magistrate in the county down affirmed that the wholesome moral results produced throughout the community was due to the religious movement and expressed his wish that, I'm quoting him, that it would extend over the whole country and influence society to its lowest depths.

That is what happens when God really moves in revival and that is what we need. We sang tonight revive us again. You know we need God to revive us again in Ulster and we need God to awaken and revive in the south as well and we thank God for what he's done in the past.

I thank God and we should praise God for what he did in 1859, for what he did in 1920 and any other year where he's blessed in grace. But do you know and are you aware that when God comes in revival again it will be different than 1859 or 1920 and the mistake that we often make is we expect God to do the same thing over again and perhaps we even want him to repeat himself but God is the God of the new thing and he will do a new thing for a new generation and often the new thing that God does upsets the church and some in the church oppose God's new thing and it is often those who think themselves most biblically literate who oppose the new thing that God is doing and we must be sure not to fight against whatever God is doing or about to do but one thing is certain we need God to do something. Do we not? But while we need God to do something there's something for us to do.

I'm a firm believer that revival comes from God it's a sovereign act of God but as he must blow the wind we must set our seals to be ready to catch it and I believe the setting of the seals to catch the wind of revival is often the preparation for God to revive in a sovereign act when he sees his people getting right with him. Judgment must begin at the eyes of God and we must look to ourselves and we have been looking to ourselves. Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying tonight I'm not saying the conditions in the church are always directly related to what's going on in society in other words I'm not saying the problems in Ireland or the problems in Ulster or the problems anywhere in the world are the fault of the church but what I do know from the Word of God is that we are meant a salt and light in this world to make a difference.

We are meant to have an influence for good and for God and I want to challenge you today and challenge my own heart in my nation here of Ireland and wherever you are from what influence do you have? I want this message to be a wake-up call a new call to spiritual arms to be ready. Do you know that you are a

soldier? A spiritual soldier. Turn with me in your Bibles to 1st Timothy chapter 1 please and we're going to look at a number of scriptures this evening.

1st Timothy chapter 1 1st Timothy 1 verse 18 this charge I commit to you son Timothy according to the prophecies previously made concerning you that by them you may wage the good warfare. We are fighting now praise God we are fighting from victory not for victory. We've read the last chapter of the book and praise God we win for we are in the land and yet the theater of operations to use a military term is down here and we are playing out the battle though we are in victory we are still called upon to fight in the victory like the children of Israel as they possess Canaan the land was already theirs it was promised to them but they had to put one foot in front of the other and they had to fight.

You understand how much God sees you as a spiritual soldier if you turn to chapter 6 of 1st Timothy we see this again verse 12 fight the good fight of faith. We are spiritual soldiers in a spiritual battle. Turn with me now to Ephesians chapter 6 Ephesians 6 and verse 12 Paul says again for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this age against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places and I believe that there is a demonic hierarchy there and that is what we wrestle against as Christians that is the battle that we are in it is an unseen battle and therefore you need the eyes of faith to perceive it.

A further description of this battle is found in 1st Peter 5 and verse 8 you don't need to turn to it but Peter says there be vigilant be sober waken up for your adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The devil is not interested in the world he has the world he's interested in the church he's interested with you Christian. We are spiritual soldiers in a spiritual battle and therefore we have spiritual weapons.

Turn with me to 2nd Corinthians please 2nd Corinthians chapter 10 verse 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Our weapons are not the weapons of human warfare but spiritual weapons where am I going with all this? Well friends I want to say this very bluntly and I might be shot down for it but the church of Jesus Christ throughout what should have been her illustrious history has been shamed by the fact that she has turned often to politics often to the establishment and the institutions of society to wage her warfare and even to the sword in the name of Christ rather than using her spiritual weapon. Really what I'm saying is the church must be aware of politics.

Do you agree with me? Now please don't misunderstand me politics can bring reform and often good reform and we've seen men of God who have realized that for nations such as slavery and so on freedom brought to slaves in the United Kingdom and further afield and praise God for it but we must understand that politics will never bring revival and conservative evangelicals neo-conservatives in America need to waken up to this fact that through legislation and through lawyers you will never change a nation you might influence it I'll give you that and I'm not saying that as a Christian you should not be involved in politics I can't tell you that I have no right to tell you that but when Christians try to use politics or try to use the legal system to bring some kind of move of God they will always fail it seems today with some that our influence with God doesn't matter but with the politicians we know and the lawyers we know rather than the God we know and the Bible says that them that know their God shall do exploit. Now I want to say this from my heart there are certain political positions that may equate with what we believe as Christians but it is impossible I believe it even is sacrilegious to pin political or even national colors to the gospel of Jesus

Christ and it has been done for years it has been done in my nation it has been done right across the globe right across Europe. Now listen the gospel ought never to be politicized the gospel ought never to be racialized the gospel ought never to be nationalized and isn't it interesting that the Lord the Savior of the world never engaged in politics does that not say something oh yes he spoke to it he referred to it he commented on it but he said my kingdom is not of this world else my servants would fight the disciples did not engage in politics did they miss a trick Paul the great apostle didn't involve himself in politics indeed he said Philippians that his citizenship was heavenly and Peter the Apostle said that he was a pilgrim and a stranger in this world.

Now we are to be responsible and obey the government and the laws of our land it is an ordinance of God and we are to respect them and we are to see if God and sovereign providence has allowed those to rule over us who do rule over us and we have a right to use judicial processes but this is what I'm saying tonight we are not obligated to become an integral part of the system but more than that we must rid ourselves of this perception that we can use the world system to bring revival or to bring a godly or a lasting change. John says that this world system listen to how he puts it lies in the lap of the wicked one and I think that that is evidenced and manifested in the corruption that we see in politics right throughout the world. Think about it politics is a system of compromise decisions are made on the basis of what is expedient of what what works pragmatically rather than what is right what is moral what is just politics whilst it may have good uses is only a band-aid over the cancer of sin and fallenness and depravity in this world the gospel is the answer the only answer you believe that.

Turn with me to 2nd Timothy please again in chapter 2 this time. If we believe that the gospel is the only answer for our nation's soldier the spiritual soldier in the spiritual battle with spiritual weapons Paul says 2nd Timothy chapter 2 verse 4 no one no soldier engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. You not be bothered with those things you understand your enrollment as a spiritual soldier and your eyes of faith to see the spiritual battle that we are engaged in with the emissaries of evil and you understand the not carnal fleshly but mighty spiritual weapons that we have to pull down the strongholds of Satan in Jesus name you'll not bother with any secondary or lesser things.

Remember the Lord Jesus said in one occasion let the dead bury the dead you know what that really means let the unregenerate people get on with unregenerate things if you follow me my king. Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you the gospel is the answer we are spiritual soldiers in a spiritual battle with spiritual weapons. I want you to see now from Ephesians 6 if you will turn back to it with me that we have spiritual armor I know that this is elementary to some of you and you've heard this many many times before but there may be those here that don't know it or have forgotten it or have lost the effectiveness of the armor that God has given them.

Let us read this passage together Ephesians 6 and verse 10 please. Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles or the schemes of the devil for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this age against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having girded your waist with truth having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the same.

I haven't got time tonight to do an exposition of the armor of God the penalty of God but let me sum it up very briefly like this this spiritual armor that has been given to us through the precious shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus that we are to put on by faith and accept through grace it is necessary because there is a battle for the mind that's why you need a helmet the devil wants to take your head off you know why he does it by your thought like the battlefield where Satan wages is the mind and if he can get into your mind he will get everywhere that's why we put on the helmet of salvation which teaches us what we are who we are in Christ and what we enjoy as an inheritance in heavenly places seated with him and you've got to understand who you are in Christ the counteract the lies of the devil the truth sets you free you see but there's a battle on for your mind what do you put into your mind what do I put into my mind there's also a for the heart that's why we need a breastplate of righteousness the vitals are here in the the chest cavity and we we need spiritually our emotions and our soul to be protected but it's also not only a battle for the mind and a battle for the heart for out of the heart of the issues of life but it's a battle for truth there is a such a war waged and I think this is Satan's primary strategy to attack the truth where it's the literal truth of God's Word revealed in Scripture or the truth of who you are in Christ or whether it's to lie to your mind and plant seed thoughts so that you will get distracted and start thinking foolish things about yourself that God says is not true but we are to guard ourselves with the belt of truth now you know what that means not that we hold the truth in our hands in our Bible but the truth holds us battle for the mind a battle for the heart a battle for truth and there's a battle on for souls that's why we're to shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace how beautiful are the feet of him that brings good news tidings of peace and we are to be ready at all times to give an answer to any man and take the gospel where Christ calls us I look further at this this armor because not only does it tell us there's a battle for the mind a battle for the heart a battle for truth a battle for battle for souls but it tells us how this battle is to be fought it is to be fought by faith taking therefore the shield of faith is to be fought with the Bible not just believing God which is faith accepting what God has said and standing upon it but using the Bible as an offensive weapon and here the Bible is spoken of as a two-edged sword the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God now the literal Greek word used for word there is not the same as in John chapter 1 logos which is spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ as being the expression of the mind and heart of God as God's only begotten Son but here the word is Rhema which means the spoken Word of God the weapon we are to use in this path is to speak the Word of God but the final piece of armor is prayer John Bunyan describes it as all prayer all types of prayer and brother Paul earlier was hinting at that but it's not just about intercession it's not even just about dialogue various types of praying always constant prayer all types of prayer and supplication in the spirit it must be spirit wrought and spirit inspired prayer being watchful watchful prayer persevering prayer supplication for all the Saints comprehensive prayer and every soldier is required to be in communication with headquarters but prayer is number seven in the armor of God and you know number seven is the number of perfection the number of completeness and in other words we could go into the Bible with all the armor of God on but if we are not praying we're in trouble because prayer brings God onto the battlefield now look at 1st Timothy with me please 1st Timothy let me show you how this is we don't need politics 1st Timothy chapter 2 verse 1 and 2 therefore I exhort first of all that supplications prayer intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men for kings and for all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence there it is prayer brings God to the field even in international and national affairs you believe that is it reflected in our lives if we believe it I don't think the church certainly in Ulster and in Ireland as a whole is realizing the power of prayer do you have an evangelist friend who wrote a number of lines about the power of prayer

and I just want to read them to you tonight he said Abraham prayed and lot was spared Isaac prayed and Rebekah conceived Jacob prayed and Esau was pacified Job prayed and trials were ended Moses prayed and Amalek was defeated Joshua prayed and was found out Samson prayed and strength was regained Hannah prayed and Samuel was born David prayed and sin was cleansed Solomon prayed and wisdom was given Elijah prayed and fire descended he prayed again and the showers fell Hezekiah prayed and invaders withdrew Jonah prayed and was given another chance Daniel prayed and lions were muzzled Nehemiah prayed and a king listened Peter prayed and was saved from drowning a publican prayed and went home justified a thief prayed and went to paradise Paul prayed and sight was restored Stephen prayed and saw the Lord Cornelius prayed and was told what to do John prayed and gained a vision of the future the Apostle James prayed and his knees became callous Payson prayed and the floorboards were worn Baxter prayed and steam to study walls with praying breath Knox prayed and monarchs trembled Nick Sheehan prayed and Scotland wept Susanna Wesley prayed and presented Britain with her her two sons Luther prayed and dispelled the darkness of centuries Zinzendorf prayed and started world missions Savarola prayed and Florence was purged Tyndale prayed and a king's eyes were opened Bunyan prayed and received light in prison Rutherford prayed and saved souls in Anwar Muller prayed and orphans were fed Hudson Taylor prayed and missionaries sailed to China William Booth prayed and the poor entered the kingdom Chalmers prayed and the cannibalism died out in the South Sea Kerry prayed and widow burning was banned in India Gladys Healwood prayed and orphans were adopted Jonathan Goforth prayed and swayed Mancuria John Hyde prayed and won souls daily for Christ Reiner prayed and influenced more missionaries than Indians Mary Schleser prayed maintaining can do anything David Livingstone prayed and died thus on his knees and he ends the poem by saying this all these also worked hard preached wrote traveled and poured out their lives for Jesus but they had at least one thing in common they prayed and left a legacy of achievements that illustrates the truth more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of and greatest of them all Jesus prayed and continues his intercession today hallelujah you believe more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of I would suggest to you that the church to a large extent has given up on prayer there is a need for a new call to arms as soldiers spiritual soldiers in a spiritual battle with spiritual weapons wearing spiritual armor we must dress for battle that's what we read in our reading at the very beginning in Romans chapter 13 and verse 12 we are to put off the works of darkness the works of the flesh we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ the armor of light this armor of God being a soldier of the cross demands consecration but the problem is in times of prosperity and upon peace it's easy for the army that is the church militant to put down its guard and go off the offensive and even off the defensive we must say as we look into the Bible and into history must I be carried to the skies of ease while others fight to win the prize and seal through bloody sea it was in times of prosperity that Israel forgot their God read the book of Judges you see the cycle there prosperity came and they fell into sin and idolatry and God chastised them by sending oppressors and then they cried out for mercy and it seemed they repented and it wasn't long when God delivered them with the judge that they returned back to their sin and maybe you find yourself in that cycle I tell you the church finds itself in that cycle what we need to do is what that nation failed to do in the book of Ruth we read of a little family of them elect was the head of the home and he took his wife Naomi his two sons and daughters-in-law and in a time of famine in the house of bread that's what Bethlehem means they left the house of bread and went to Moab a picture of the world but you know what they should have done they should have stayed where they were and asked the Lord what is wrong for if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my peace and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven forgive their sin heal their land we need to stay where we are not run for this solution in politics or law or wherever the church growth movement we need to just stay where we are in the midst of the death and

the famine and cry oh Lord why what a wake-up call is needed are we living a soldier oh praise God we are promised ultimate time the Word of God teaches us that very clearly our wicked spiritual forces we have a promise that they will be defeated the Lord Jesus told his own disciples behold I give you power to trade on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing by enemies shall hurt you not only do we have ultimate victory and triumph over wicked spiritual forces but even over the severest afflictions in our lives all said who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us even victory over worldly attractions whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith and we have victory promised over all satanic powers it says in Revelation 12 and verse 11 that they overcame him that is the devil by the blood of the lamb the devil hates the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony now my friend we need to ask the question are we making a difference where God has placed us in our community we can't make a difference that will be meaningful and lasting for the kingdom of God through law through politics through influence in the flesh it must be of the Spirit I was reading John Piper not so long ago and he he was referring to Martin Luther King civil rights movement in the United States and and I know that many of you might disagree with some of his beliefs and certainly his actions politically and I've been espousing that we don't need to use politics but John Piper was referring to how Martin Luther King jr. was charged as being an extremist now this was his reply this was his reply and he was true and right in his reply and I'm quoting him he says was not Jesus an extremist for love love your enemies bless them that curse you do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you was not Amos an extremist for justice let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus was Martin Luther not an extremist when he said here I stand I can do no other so help me God John Bunyan when he said I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I will make a butchery of my conscience and Abraham Lincoln thus this nation cannot survive half-slave and half-free here's how Martin Luther King jr. concluded his remarks the question is not whether we will be an extremist but what kind of extremist we will be will we be an extremist for politics civil rights no for the gospel and then all these things shall be added unto us and then of course Luther King delivered a powerful call to the church which rings true today as it did 40 years ago and whatever you think of him what he said was right there was a time when the church was very powerful in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believe in those days the church listen was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion it was a thermostat that transformed the more age of society but he said the judgment of God is upon the church of his day as never before and if today's church does not be a capture the sacrificial spirit of the early church it will lose its authenticity forfeit the loyalty of millions and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the 20th century Martin Luther King jr. of course in 1963 August the 28th he stood before the Lincoln Memorial and gave his most memorable speech I have a dream that one day the Red Hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character now listen to me tonight whether you agree with his politics whether you agree with a civil rights movement whether you agree with with his religious convictions whether you agree with his morality you've got to agree that his dream was a great one and it is the ecumenical dream to a certain extent and often with many people in the ecumenical movement which I have no sympathy with whatsoever and oppose they have a sincere desire to unite divided humanity the tragedy is politics can't do it government can't do it civil rights can't do it ecumenism can't do

it they don't know how to do it but the greater tragedy is the church knows the church has the answer but the church isn't doing it this is so close to my heart I want you just now and I'm almost finished to turn to Ephesians chapter 2 this is God's plan for the church Ephesians chapter 2 and I want to read from verse 11 now watch carefully God's plan for the church therefore verse 11 of Ephesians 2 remember that you once Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision made in the flesh by hands that at that time you were without Christ being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ we were Gentile unless you're a Jew here tonight the Gentiles have no claim on the God of Israel and yet now there's a new message in the new covenant in the gospel of Christ in the New Testament to the world indeed it was God's plan all along the through Israel there would be a light to the whole world see that in the book of Jonah and here's how God did it verse 14 for he himself Christ is our peace who is need both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in himself here's God's plan one new man from the two thus making peace and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enmity and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off unto those who were near for through him we both have access by one spirit to the father now therefore you are no longer strangers hallelujah and foreigners but fellow citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God having been built on the foundation of the Apostle and prophets Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place a dwelling place of God in the spirit what was God's plan listen one new man a new people a new people free from the divisions of nationality race culture language united in Christ now sometimes certain churches have to exist because of linguistic barriers but we must be very careful that we reflect the vision of God that all men would be united in Christ can this really happen today yes I'm God wants it to happen you imagine what it was for the Jews with all this history what it meant for them to accept the Gentiles the Jews had the true and living God Yahweh the Jews had the Old Testament covenant the Jews had been given the law the Jews had the promise of Messiah culturally and socially the Jews had circumcision they had the food laws they had the purification rituals and all those were designed to typify the fact that the Jews were set apart from other people in holiness unto the Lord think of the racial hurdles the Jews had their bloodline going right back to Jacob to Israel and because of that verse 11 and verse 12 tell us categorically that we are foreigners as Gentiles we are outcasts we are aliens so what happened between verse 11 and 12 so that we see in verse 19 through to 22 there is reconciliation what made the difference read with me verse 13 now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ he himself is our peace he's broken down the wall of separation he's abolished the curse of the law of the commandments that were against us he's reconciled us to God he has made one body verse 16 through the cross putting to death the enmity and he preached peace to you who were far off he is brought near that's a mighty vision and it's God's vision and he says in chapter 1 and verse 10 this is his plan that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth in him so that now there is neither Jew nor Greek there's neither slave nor free there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ that was God's vision how do we measure up for years and Ulster the gospel was wrapped in a Union Jack maybe in your country the gospel has been wrapped in stars and stripes there's some other identification or association you realize how contaminating that influence is to the cause of Christ do you realize that the atheists are still talking about the Crusades that's how damaging it is Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu but he admired the Lord Jesus Christ and he often quoted

from the Sermon on the Mount and a missionary by the name of Stanley Jones on one occasion met with Gandhi and he asked he said Mr. Gandhi though you quote the words of Christ often why is it that you appear to so adamantly reject becoming his follower and Gandhi replied oh I don't reject your Christ I love your Christ it's just that so many of your Christians are so unlike your Christ and apparently Gandhi's rejection of Christianity grew out of an incident that happened when he was a young man practicing law in South Africa he had become attracted to the Christian faith and he had studied the Bible and the teachings of Jesus and he was really seriously exploring becoming a Christian and so he decided one Sunday to attend a church service and as he came up the steps of the large church where he intended to go a white South African elder of the church barred his way at the door and said where do you think you're going copper that is a pejorative term a derogatory term the man asked Gandhi that question and Gandhi replied I'd like to attend worship here and the church elder snarled at him he says there's no room for covers in this church get out of here or I'll have my assistants throw you down the steps and from that moment Gandhi said he decided to adopt the good he found in Christianity but he would never again consider becoming a Christian if it meant being part of the church I have a dream my dream is that the people of this island would be united in Christ and it's not just a dream amen it's not just a dream it's God's vision but there is a call to arms from the mouth of babes there's a call to arms we have something to do are you AWOL absent without leave are you a deserter are you hiding it's high time to away the night is far spent put off the works of darkness the works of the flesh put on the armor of light Jesus Christ onward Christian soldier looking on to Jesus who has gone before let us pray as every head is bowed and we don't want to rush you don't want to rush when we're in the presence of God why would we want to rush when they're in the presence of God and I know some of the things I've touched on might be seen as controversial I don't know I don't care all I care is what God what his mandate is what his revelation is the call to the church to rise to their inheritance to walk worthy of the calling you've been conscripted by grace to fight in the victory and we have God's promises with God behind us in his purposes and I'll tell you Ireland is open as never before they're disillusioned in the north with politics they're disillusioned in the south which the legend and they need Christ who will tell them you will go you will rise it's not arms of the flesh but of the spirit and take the field for Jesus will you volunteer today would you open your heart I used to sing to the tune Irish eyes are smiling Ireland need to see this eye is so green and so fair Oh father I know that this word has been here and there and everywhere but I'm just trying to discharge the burden in my heart I trust that it is of you and your spirit Oh God and me if Lord you please may ignite a fire from Dublin that will spread to Bantry Baltimore Donegal Cork Coleraine Caroline Oh Lord let there be a fire will breathe a trail for Christ in Ireland Lord we would not be proclaimed we love our land but Lord we long that the nation's represented here that either in localities or nationalities that there would be mighty moves of God Lord you've done it before but we're not letting you to do what you've done before we're looking for you to do a new thing thing that will be for our generation that will meet their needs that will answer their questions will satisfy their deepest longings that we believe are after God and they don't know it Oh God have mercy oh that you would rend the heavens and come down that you may put your divine footprint on this isle so-called land of saints and scholars Oh God where the saints today where the scholars of your word Oh God pour out from the windows of heaven revival on island and may you move from the south to the north to a needy hard-hearted people may the missionaries come from here to there to bring healing not political settlements but holy ghost blood-bought eternal life healing in Jesus name we pray amen

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